

Every May third, Mr. Walker
mowed a path from the pear trees
to the fish pond, clearing the view.

After May third then,
for every one of those five seasons,
I had in addition to flower and animal,
the luxury of landscaping.

It was enough without a man
but he was there also
on the inside
in a shade-drawn bedroom, reading.

He did not speak when he read
but I heard the words,
so many words.

Every sundown, I stretched
the water hose from the pump house
to the flower garden.

I wore, like my grandmother Meads,
a billowing straw hat with red band.
At ninety, she is trying to leave a man
who died before she could.

When I tell this again,
I am determined to keep the connection
between my grandmother and myself

more ambiguous,
to establish our love
of gardening first.

Then the end will fall to jonquils,
a loving dog and scenery,
the more positive approach.

-- Kathy Meads

Brooklyn NY

A KNIGHT

A knight wakes one day with a giant smile on his face.
Which is odd since he's a serious fellow, even grave.
He tries and tries, but can't stop smiling.

He walks to court head down, putting him eye to eye with the jester, a dwarf. "I'm supposed to be the jolly one," quips the dwarf. "Have you heard the one about the commoner's daughter?" and he tells it.

The knight smiles beneath somber eyes.

"Well, it's not my best stuff, but you don't have to sneer!" says the dwarf, giving him a terrific kick in the knee.

The knight hobbles off, smiling.

He nods at a lady-in-waiting who he's loved, shyly, from afar. Thrilled at his sudden smile, she speaks up. "Oh, Knight, I've admired you for your gentle ways. Not like some of these jokers at court."

The knight tries to look earnest; narrows his eyes, wrinkles his forehead, giving him a truly wicked look. "How dare you leer at me like that! Sir, I've been deceived about you!" She slaps him with her fan, flounces off.

Face smarting, he limps to his appointment with the king.

"We must speak of grave matters," says the king, "so be serious."

The knight smiles.

"Wipe that smile off your face this instant!" commands the king. "I'm not doing it, your Majesty, it just happens!" "Why, the man is quite mad," fumes the king. "You're hereby banished!"

The knight goes off, wanders from kingdom to kingdom; always alone, tears streaming down his smiling face.

A PRINCESS

A princess is bored with handsome, but shallow men. I'll marry the man who moves me with his words, she announces.

Suitors are ushered into her chamber, one by one.

The first is an engineer. You're pretty, he says. Very very pretty. Is that all? she asks. Your